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ABSTRACT

This poster presentation outlines the work of the DFE Anti-bullying project. In the first part of the poster the results of a large scale survey in the United Kingdom are presented. The results show the extent and nature of bullying. The questionnaire survey was administered to students from 24 schools in and around Sheffield, a northern industrial city in England. The paper suggests that bullying is a serious problem that often carries over into adulthood, with long-term effects on self-esteem and on the ability to cope in adult relationships. The second part of the paper describes a study developed in response to the reports of the prevalence of school bullying, the harmful consequences of bullying, and the concern about the issue in the teaching profession and the public at large. During the project different intervention methods were applied in 23 schools in the Sheffield area. Significant reductions in the amount of bullying were found. Additionally, teachers reported that children's attendance increased and the anti-bullying work supported other areas of school life. Finally, a kit and video titled " Don't Suffer in Silence: An Anti-Bullying Pack for Schools," published by the British Department of Education, is described and evaluated. (AA)

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'ACTION AGAINST BULLYING'

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ABSTRACT

The short term effects of bullying are severe, with some children even being driven to suicide. The problem often carries over into adulthood, with long term effects on self esteem and ability to cope in adult relationships (Gilmartin 1987, Rutter 1989, Besag 1989, Olweus 1991, 1993). The behaviour itself is not restricted to childhood as indicated by work on bullying in the workplace (Leymann 1990, Adams 1992, Björkqvist, Östermann & Lagerspetz 1994).

To combat this problem, schools are taking action. This poster outlines the work which the DFE Anti-bullying project have done.

SHEFFIELD SURVEY

At the end of 1990, the first large scale survey in the U.K. was carried out investigating the extent and nature of bullying. A questionnaire survey was administered to 2,623 primary aged and 4,135 secondary aged pupils from 24 schools (17 primary, 7 secondary) in and around Sheffield; a northern, industrial city in England.

Findings were as follows:

Table 1:

PRIMARY SCHOOLS	sometimes or more	once a week or more
being bullied	27%	10%
bullied others	12%	4%

Table 2

SECONDARY SCHOOLS	sometimes or more	once a week or more
being bullied	10%	4%
bullied others	6%	1%

Variation between schools occurred. The overall, incidence of reporting being bullied and bullying does decline, however the nature of bullying amongst older pupils can be serious*(refer to Whitney & Smith 1994 for more detailed account of findings).*

DFE SHEFFIELD ANTI-BULLYING PROJECT

After the initial 1990 bullying survey, schools were invited to take part in a further study, implementing interventions to reduce bullying with support by the research team.

23 schools agreed and the remaining school along with 4 other schools agreed to be control schools for the project.

Each school was required to have a whole school bullying policy, in addition they had a range of interventions to chose from:

- some Curriculum Based
- Playground Upgrade
- Training Lunch Time Supervisors
- Drama
- Assertiveness Training
- Pikas Method of Common Concern

The interventions were not standardized, rather they had a common baseline to which schools imposed their own interpretation and adapted the interventions to meet their own needs.

The assessment of the interventions was carried out by:
(a) qualitative and small-scale interviews and questionnaires given to pupils and teachers experiencing or using particular interventions;
(b) short questionnaires given to pupils daily for one week, each half term (over 4 terms), asking if they had any experience of being bullied, that day;

(c) whole school modified Olweus questionnaires given in Dec. 1990 and Dec. 1992, before and after the interventions.

All 3 assessment methods broadly agreed that there were reductions in bullying, and also found a 'dosage effect': schools which put more effort into interventions achieved more.

The project found reductions ranging from 15% to 85% in the amount of primary pupils being bullied and reductions of approximately 12% of both primary and secondary pupils bullying others. Children were more willing to tell an adult if they were aware of bullying, especially in secondary schools. They felt teachers now took action when they knew about bullying and bystanders made efforts not to condone the behaviour but rather condemn it. Additionally, teachers reported that children's attendance increased and the anti-bullying work supported other areas of school life i.e. increase in school safety, decrease in vandalism and increase in positive relations with parents.

For a full report of this work, see:
P. K. Smith & S. Sharp (eds), School Bullying: Insights and Perspectives. London: Routledge, 1994.

The more practical implications are brought out in
S. sharp & P.K. Smith (eds), Tackling Bullying in Your School: A Practical Handbook for Teachers. London: Routledge, 1994.

DON'T SUFFER IN SILENCE:
AN ANTI-BULLYING PACK FOR SCHOOLS

In September 1994 the then Department for Education published the Pack and Video "Don't Suffer in Silence: An Anti-Bullying Pack for Schools". This Pack was based on the findings of the Sheffield Anti-Bullying Project, directed by Professor Peter Smith and funded by the then Department for Education from 1991-1993. The Pack aims to provide a concise and comprehensive resource to help schools deal with bullying. Packs were made available free and on request to all maintained schools in England. The Pack and the preceding project were in response to reports of the prevalence of school bullying, the harmful consequences it could have, and the concern about the issue in the Department, the teaching profession and the public at large.

The textual part of the Pack is in a loose-leaf format and consists of 11 parts:

(1) A whole school policy on bullying: policy development, implementation and evaluation

(2) Bullying: facts and figures: brief description on the nature of bullying

(3) How much bullying is there in schools: discusses the importance of carrying out a survey, what survey methods are available and how to development a survey

(4) Teaching strategies relevant to bullying: curriculum based interventions, evaluations by pupils and teachers of these interventions

(5) Working with pupils involved in bullying situations: briefly introduces and provides an evaluation of: method of common concern, no blame approach, assertiveness training, peer counselling and bully courts

(6) Beyond the classroom: playground upgrade and lunch time supervisor training

(7) Case studies: describes the experiences of 4 different schools (2 primary and 2 secondary; varying in socio-economic status)

(8) Materials: lists other resource materials available e.g. handbooks, intervention support material, videos, useful organizations

(9) DFE Project: description and results after intervention scheme

(10) Advice for pupils, parents and families: practical advice

(11) Materials for overhead transparencies: materials which can be used in Inset days (Professional development), assemblies and workshops.

Included is a training video, lasting 25 minutes.

This Pack may be purchased through:
HMSO Publications Centre
PO Box 276, London, SW8 5DT
telephone: (0171) 873 - 9090
fax: (0171) 873 - 8200

EVALUATION

By late 1995, some 19,000 have requested the Pack. In addition, certain questions relating to whether a school has taken steps to discover if bullying is occurring and whether a school has any policy on bullying, have begun to be featured in OFSTED reports.

With funding from the Department for Education and Employment, we have now carried out a survey on the Pack and on anti-bullying work generally in schools.

AIMS:

To obtain feedback on the suitability and use of the Pack, and the extent and nature of anti-bullying work beig carried out in a representative sample of schools nationally.

OBJECTIVES:

(1) to guide any revision of the Pack over the next few years
(2) guide any other anti-bullying advice which the department might wish to give
(3) to provide noramtive data which would be of use to OFSTED inspectors in considering the anti-bullying work done and results achieved in particualr schools

109 schools have completed the questionnaire and the report will be published and made available to the public in autumn 1996. A copy of the report can be obtained through HMSO Publications Centre.

CONCLUSIONS

The sucess in England, is the direct result of the time and effort invested into tackling the issue.

However, there is still a distance to go. Bullying has likely occurred in schools as long as schools have existed and to successfully deal with the issues of bullying IT MUST REMAIN ON THE AGENDA.

> "The resultant policy will always be one of 'working towards'."
>
> Primary School Teacher

> "Be prepared for surprises. Even if you feel bullying is not a problem, keep it high profile as unacceptable behaviour."
>
> Secondary School Teacher

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